



(U) Passing on Target Expertise... IT Support... Averting an Assassination -- An Interview with [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Chief of Intelligence Security Issues (S2C), talks about the biggest task facing her product line, SID's computer needs, and more... (U//FOUO)

- What was your first job at the Agency? (U)

(TS//SI) I hired on as a Chinese linguist with the Golden Triangle Narcotics Team in late 1978. I wasn't at work long before I had an exciting experience... One day I was handed some rather garbled traffic to peruse for anything of interest. The intercept was from the narco-insurgent Shan United Army. I noticed the words "mountaintop," "man," and "gun" in the traffic and decided that something indeed must be happening!

(TS//SI) Further analysis showed that the insurgents were planning to shoot down a helicopter carrying a U.S. congressional delegation on a fact-finding trip. This information was promptly released as the first CRITIC* of 1979. I had just started my career and had played a role in helping avert an assassination attempt! I can still recall the rush of adrenaline and the feeling of doing something significant - I was hooked.

- If you could change one thing at the Agency, what would it be? (U)

(C) We need to make healthy the IT support provided to our analysts. This is a fundamental part of doing our jobs -- we at NSA need cutting-edge tools and functionality. We have not had any catastrophic failures, but there has been a constant feeling of degradation of capabilities, everything from website access to analytic tools that don't work on Agency standard PCs. What we use at work must be better than what we have at home.

- What is the most exciting project for the future that your organization is involved in? (U)

(S//SI) I believe the most important task facing us now is to make sure that our senior analysts, before they retire, pass on their knowledge to the younger generation of analysts. Our Product Line, International Security Issues, covers a range of topics, including Western European targets, Japan, Mexico, Brazil, and Follow-the-Money (FTM). The common denominator among all these targets is that they deal with economic and diplomatic issues. I consider our expertise on these topics to be a core competency for ISI, just as it is a core competency for NSA within the Intelligence Community.

(S//SI) These are important issues: economic troubles are a major contributor to instability, and much depends upon our nation's diplomatic relations. The FTM branch's motto is "Without money, there is no jihad," so these even tie in with the War on Terror. It is absolutely critical that our senior analysts, who have an amazing level of expertise on these matters, teach the junior personnel what they know.

- What was the most memorable experience you've had during your career? (U)

(S//SI) It's a toss-up. I was a branch chief in the China/Korea Product Line at the time of the Tiananmen crisis of 1989, and had the opportunity to brief both the HPSCI and SSCI* committees of Congress on the subject. This was a great privilege for someone at my grade level! My branch also issued the very first video SIGINT report at that time.

(S//SI) My other "best experience" was working as the SINIO for East Asia in the early 1990's. We provided support to policymakers regarding the US-North Korea Agreed Framework negotiations, an attempt to avert a crisis on the Korean Peninsula. It was a great opportunity to

work with Intelligence Community counterparts at CIA, DIA, State, the Pentagon, etc.

*(U) Notes:

(C) CRITIC: Critical information is that information concerning possible foreign threats to US national security that are so significant that they require the immediate attention of the President and the National Security Council. CRITIC information is sent at the highest precedence by the most rapid means available to ensure delivery within 10 minutes.

(U) HPSCI = House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

(U) SSCI = Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

(U) Here are some other recent interviews of SID leaders...

- (U) [Do We Over-Classify? Are We Sharing Enough Information? ... An Interview with \[REDACTED\]](#)
- (U) [Interview with... Charlie Meals, Signals Intelligence Deputy Director](#)
- (U//FOUO) [Interview with ... \[REDACTED\], Chief, SIGINT Development - Strategy and Governance \(SSG\)](#)
- (U//FOUO) [Interview with... Jim Cusick, SID/Assistant Deputy Director for Data Acquisition \(S3\)](#)

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